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The Naval Postgraduate School a View of the Future

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The Naval Postgraduate School A View to the Future

Introduction. At the dawn of the 21st century, the Navy is poised at the intersection of three major movements: the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), the Revolution in Business Affairs (RBA), and the Revolution in Educational Affairs (REA). The great advances that are taking place in the worlds of information technology and networking drive all three movements. NPS is well positioned to provide the Navy with the specialized, advanced education needed to be effective in the new century.

Background. The Navy has embraced Joint Vision 2010, Joint Vision 2020 and Network Centric Operations as the organizing principles for future naval developments, and as the linchpins of the RMA. These principles clearly imply that the future operating environment for our forces will be dominated by speed and agility: the speed with which we can understand our environment; the speed with which we share that understanding, the speed with which we make decisions; and the speed and agility with which we can execute to achieve our desired effects.

The Navy is also seeking to fundamentally change the supporting business practices of the Department. The goal of the RBA is to deliver state-of-the-art capability from modern and creative acquisition and support organizations, building upon lessons learned from the best industry practice.

The REA is less talked about, but it is no less important to the future. In the broadest sense, the REA is the creation, delivery and use of knowledge based upon the most effective teaching, learning, and information retrieval practices. It is the key to future readiness as it will provide officer and enlisted forces the means to effectively deal with changes required by new technologies, reduced manning, and rapid pace of innovation.

Imperatives. Joint Vision 2010 and 2020 recognize that high quality people, innovative leadership and the right organizational structure are needed to prepare joint warriors for the challenges of the future battlespace. To develop the ideas introduced in Joint Vision 2010 and 2020 for network centric operations, we need a high percentage of officers with a graduate level understanding of science, technology and management, along with a thorough understanding of systems engineering and integration. We need to develop an officer corps with strong analytical and technical skills in areas of simulation science, operational analysis, uncertainty, information and decision sciences, organizational management, management of technology, systems engineering and integration, and regional security studies.

The Naval Postgraduate School is responding to these challenges by realigning its education and supporting research programs to achieve three major goals: 1) academic programs that are nationally recognized and support the current and future operations of the Navy and Marine Corps, our sister services, and our allies; 2) centers that focus on the integration of teaching and research in direct support of the four pillars of Joint Vision 2010 and 2020 and their enabling technologies; and, 3) executive and continuing education programs that support continuous intellectual innovation and growth throughout an officer's career.

The intellectual and academic base of NPS resides within our faculty and academic departments. In order to have inter-disciplinary educational programs that meet the need for officers described in JV2020, our faculty and academic departments must be recognized as the finest in the nation.

We will support, encourage, and reward excellence in all aspects of scholarship. Our academic programs will not be replicable anywhere in the world. They will reflect the high quality of our students and faculty, our ability to be agile and flexible in responding to the needs of our customers and our ability to provide an education that integrates teaching and research.

One of the keys to providing NPS students the tools and the intellectual capacity to thrive in the world of Joint Vision 2020 is centers that integrate teaching and research, faculty and students, and theory and application. Our vision of the future NPS includes the development and nourishment of a number of these major centers. They will be built around the existing strengths of NPS in response to the challenges of Joint Vision 2020 and will involve faculty and students from across the campus. They will provide exceptional and unique capabilities for further experimentation, exercises, analyses, and conceptual developments in support of Joint Vision 2020 and its implementation. Our Centers will have strong working relations with the Navy's Sea Based Battle Lab, the Naval Warfare Development Command, industry and other organizations and universities. What will set these Centers apart is the integration of NPS students working with faculty on advanced concepts to ensure that our forces remain dominant across the full spectrum of military operations.

It is absolutely essential that we expand our range of continuing education options. Our Center for Executive Education will continue to grow and to develop a wider range of programs for our senior executives, military and civilian. We will develop new continuing education programs for our senior managers, officers who are not able to attend NPS, and for our alumni at all phases in their careers to ensure that they stay at the cutting edge of developments in new and current RMAs, RBAs, and REAs.

Enablers. The NPS vision for Educational and Informational Technology (EIT) requires that our faculty and staff are experienced in using modern technologies in teaching and learning. We must nurture and sustain efforts in multi-media technology, educational technology, and the technology of distance education. Through the use of distance learning technologies, students on-campus and at remote sites at sea, across the nation, and throughout the world will be provided broad access to the faculty and facilities on campus. Telecommunications and EIT will make it possible for NPS to have an "expanded" campus through which we can provide education how, when and where there is a demand.

The NPS campus must also reflect the high-quality and excellence of our teaching and research. NPS facilities must be developed to meet the future needs of the REA. We must be able to accommodate students and faculty both on and off campus with the service and support they deserve. To this end, all processes at NPS are under a business process reengineering review to obtain the highest quality product and lowest cost across the command.

Concluding Remarks. The Naval Studies Board concluded that education is a generator of readiness with a high rate of return on investment. But, a high rate of return requires planning and investment. This paper provides a brief overview of NPS plans to provide the nation with a substantial return for its investment in the NPS. NPS will be the cornerstone of military-relevant graduate-level education for our Naval services, other U.S. militaries, and our allies. We are a highly focused, pragmatically oriented research university dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and service in pursuit of providing the knowledge required of our forces of today and tomorrow.